

ART. XVII.—*Report of the Antarctic Committee of the
Royal Society of Victoria.*

[Read 16th November, 1893.]

Your Committee has held a few meetings during the year, sitting with the corresponding Committee of the Royal Geographical Society of Australia, as hitherto. There has been very little work to do since Baron Dickson decided to withdraw his co-operation in the proposed Swedish-Australian expedition to have been despatched in the charge of Baron Nordenskiöld. Nevertheless, our efforts to direct attention to this region have, during the past year, borne their first fruits in the despatch of five steam whalers. These vessels carried a limited staff of observers and the scientific work done was subordinated very strictly to the commercial purposes of the owners of the ships. The vessels having found a plentiful supply of seals in latitude 64° S., under the lee of Trinity land, went no further south. Dr. Donald and Mr. W. S. Bruce have written important papers descriptive of their observations on board the *Balena* and *Active*, and these will shortly be published by the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain. A fine collection of southern birds has been brought back, and a collection of drawings and photographs which was exhibited at the last meeting of the British Association attracted considerable attention, and has led to a vote of money to enable Mr. Bruce to spend next year upon one of the Antarctic Islands making further observations.

As the owners of the ships are sending them out again this year it may be concluded that the cargoes brought home last year were of a sufficiently payable nature to ensure further exploration of the region for commercial purposes. Further, we shall shortly be able to record an effort to re-open the Antarctic on the meridian of Australia or New Zealand, as a steam whaler, the *Antarctic*, left Tonsberg in Norway on 19th September, under the command of Captain Bull. She will go direct to Newcastle N.S.W., where she will fill her bunkers and then start for the

south. A small bonus from our Government would induce her owners to allow her to return with her cargo to Melbourne, and thus to initiate the new industry which we have long sought to get our local shipowners and merchants to embark in—so far without success. Efforts should also be made to secure a passage for a scientific observer, whose work need not impede the work of the voyage whilst it should be of the greatest scientific value.

We must congratulate the Society upon the efforts made by the joint Committee during the past seven years, as they have resulted in the re-opening of the Antarctic Seas, after fifty years of absolute neglect.

G. S. GRIFFITHS,

Hon. Secretary Antarctic Sub-Committee.